

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method for enabling a function of an information handling system configured for communication with a central system via a communication link, the method comprising the steps of:

providing communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link;

requesting authentication via the communication link from the central system for enabling the function on the information handling system; and

upon receipt of the authentication from the central system, enabling the function to be performed independent of the communication link with the central system.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the authentication requesting step comprises communicating an identification for the information handling system to the central system.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the identification communicating step further comprises encrypting the information handling system identification.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
receiving the authentication request from the information handling system in the central system;
determining if the authentication request is valid; and
upon validating the authentication request, providing authentication to the information handling system.

5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of encrypting the authentication.

6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of: upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denying authentication.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of: upon failure to receive authentication from the central system, disabling the function.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the authentication requesting step is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the function.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of terminating the communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising the step of disabling the function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the authentication has been reached.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises starting the information handling system.

12. (Original) The method as recited in claim 11, wherein starting the information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

13. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein authentication comprises of an encrypted token passed between the central system and the information handling system.

14. (Original) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows provision of the function independent of the location of the information handling system relative to the central system.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows provision of the function only from a predetermined location with regard to the communication link between the central system and the information handling system.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the token allows for execution of a predetermined number of ~~said~~ functions from a remote location.

17. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises loading an operating system.

18. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the function comprises executing a software application.

19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein each authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

20. (Original) A program of instructions storable on a medium readable by an information handling system for implementing a method enabling the information handling system to execute a function, said information handling system being configured to communicate with a central system via a communication link, the steps comprising:

providing communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link;

requesting authentication via the communication link from the central system for enabling the function on the information handling system; and

upon receipt of the authentication from the central system, enabling the function to be performed independent of the communication link with the central system.

21. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the authentication requesting step comprises communicating an identification for the information handling system to the central system.

22. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 21, wherein the identification communicating step further comprises encrypting the information handling system identification.

23. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the steps of:

receiving the authentication request from the information handling system in the central system;

determining if the authentication request is valid; and

upon validating the authentication request, providing authentication to the information handling system.

24. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 23, further comprising the step of encrypting the authentication.

25. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

upon determination that the authentication request is invalid, denying authentication.

26. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of:

upon failure to receive authentication from the central system, disabling the function.

27. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 26, wherein the authentication requesting step is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the function.

28. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of terminating the communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

29. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 28, further comprising the step of disabling the function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the authentication has been reached.

30. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function comprises starting the information handling system.

31. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 30, wherein starting the information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

32. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function comprises loading an operating system.

33. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, wherein the function comprises executing a software application.

34. (Original) The program of instructions as recited in claim 33, wherein each authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

35. (Currently Amended) An information handling system comprising:
a processor for executing a program of instructions on the information handling system;
a memory coupled to the processor for storing the program of instructions executable by the processor; and
a communication device coupled to the processor for establishing a communication link between the information handling system and a central system via a network; and
said program of instructions capable of configuring the information handling system to request authentication from the central system via the communication link for enabling a function, and upon receipt of authentication from the central system, enabling the function, wherein the function is performed independently of the central system.

36. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of instructions further configures the information handling system to communicate an identification to the central system.

37. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 36, wherein the information handling system identification is encrypted.

38. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the central system, upon receiving the authentication request from the information handling system, determines if the authentication request is valid, and upon determination that the authentication request is valid, providing authentication to the information handling system.

39. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 38, wherein the authentication is encrypted.

40. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 38, wherein the central system, upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denies authentication.

41. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of instructions further configures the information handling system to disable the function if authentication is not received from the central system.

42. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 41, wherein the authentication request is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the function.

43. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to terminate the communication link prior to execution of at least part of the function.

44. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 43, wherein the program of instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to disable

the function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the authentication has been reached.

45. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function comprises starting the information handling system.

46. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 45, wherein starting the information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

47. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function comprises loading an operating system.

48. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 35, wherein the function comprises executing a software application.

49. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 48, wherein each authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

50. (Currently amended) An information handling system comprising:
means for executing a program of instructions on the information handling system;
means, coupled to the executing means, for storing the program of instructions executable by the executing means;
means, coupled to the executing means, for establishing a communication link with a central system via a network; and
said program of instructions capable of configuring the information handling system to request authentication from the central system via the communication link for enabling a function, and upon receipt of authentication from the central system, enabling the function, wherein the function is performed independently of the central system.

51. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of instructions further configures the information handling system to communicate an identification to the central system.

52. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 51, wherein the information handling system identification is encrypted.

53. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the central system, upon receiving the authentication request from the information handling system, determines if the authentication request is valid, and upon determination that the authentication request is valid, providing authentication to the information handling system.

54. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 53, wherein the authentication is encrypted.

55. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 53, wherein the central system, upon determining that the authentication request is invalid, denies authentication.

56. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to disable the function if authentication is not received from the central system.

57. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 56, wherein the authentication request is repeated a predetermined number of times before disabling the function.

58. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of instructions is capable of configuring the information handling system to terminate the communication link prior to executing at least a part of the function.

59. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 58, wherein the program of instructions further configures the information handling system to disable the

function after usage of a predetermined number of functions enabled by the authentication has been reached.

60. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function comprises starting the information handling system.

61. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 60, wherein starting the information handling system comprises executing a basic input/output system (BIOS).

62. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function comprises loading an operating system.

63. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 50, wherein the function comprises executing a software application.

64. (Original) The information handling system as recited in claim 63, wherein each authentication received allows execution of the software application for a predetermined period of time.

65. (New) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
ending the communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link after receipt of the authentication; and
thereafter, performing the function.

66. (New) The program of instructions as recited in claim 20, further comprising the steps of:
ending the communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link after receipt of the authentication; and
thereafter, performing the function.

67. (New) The system as recited in claim 35, wherein the program of instructions is further capable of configuring the information handling system to end the communication

between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link after receipt of the authentication, and, thereafter, to perform the function.

68. (New) The system as recited in claim 50, wherein the program of instructions is further capable of configuring the information handling system to end the communication between the information handling system and the central system via the communication link after receipt of the authentication, and, thereafter, to perform the function.